

The call is out: Revive the old Morgan dollars

By Roger Boye

If some lawmakers in Washington had their way, silver dollars bearing the old "Morgan design" would roll off of coinage machines once again.

With a revived dollar, the federal government could dispose of its huge silver stockpiles without disrupting the precious-metal market, say congressmen who proposed the legislation. And resurrection of a coin design last used in 1921 would thrill collectors, they add.

Before you go to the bank to snatch up the silver nuggets, however, be forewarned: Experts predict the proposal has little chance of becoming law, at least in the next two years. It's just another of more than 25 hobby-related bills introduced in Congress since January, most of which will die in committees when the 98th Congress ends late next year.

Many officials oppose the Morgan-dollar idea, for example, because they fear the coins could undermine the sale of Olympic commemoratives. For the same reason, those persons also object to other bills calling for production of gold coins in various sizes.

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Stephen J. Solarz [D., N.Y.] wants the government to ban the importation of krugerrands to protest South Africa's apartheid policies.

Still other hobby-related bills in Congress would require Uncle Sam to:

- Impose a 2 percent tariff on krugerrands.

- Trim the corners of currency to help the blind.

- Put the portrait of Georgia Neese Clark, first woman U.S. treasurer, on the \$50 Federal Reserve note, in place of Ulysses S. Grant.

- Broaden the powers of the U.S. Postal Service to investigate companies suspected of mail fraud involving silver and gold coins and other items.

- Force dealers of gold and silver to keep records of purchases for at least a year, including a description and thumbprint of the seller, in an attempt to reduce the fencing of stolen property. The legislation also would prohibit transactions with persons under 18 years of age.

- Produce medals honoring entertainer Danny Thomas; Dr. Barney Clark, first recipient of an artificial heart; Paul W. "Bear" Bryant, the football coach who died last year; and others.

Nearly 100 dealers from several states will sell old coins and related collectibles in two weeks at the fourth annual show of Numismatics of Illinois Sales and Exchange. Hours will be 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. June 24, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. June 25 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 26 at the O'Hare Exposition Center, 5600 River Rd., Rosemont. Admission will be free.